

**Draft Summary of the Recreation and Socioeconomics Work Group Meeting  
Oroville Facilities Relicensing (FERC Project No. 2100)  
June 26, 2003**

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) hosted a meeting for the Recreation and Socioeconomics Work Group (RSWG) on June 26, 2003 in Oroville.

A summary of the discussion, decisions made, and action items is provided below. This summary is not intended to be a transcript, analysis of the meeting, or to indicate agreement or disagreement with any of the items summarized, except where expressly stated. The intent is to present a summary for interested parties who could not attend the meeting. The following are attachments to this summary:

Attachment 1	Meeting Agenda
Attachment 2	Meeting Attendees
Attachment 3	Flip Chart Notes
Attachment 4	Geographic Reaches for Purposes of Resource Action Discussions
Attachment 5	Flow Chart for Recreation Visitation and Economic/Fiscal Models
Attachment 6	Recreation Visitation Models: Preliminary Results
Attachment 7	Property Value Analysis (Hedonic-Pricing Technique)
Attachment 8	Recreation and Socioeconomic Resource Action Matrix

### **Introduction**

Attendees were welcomed to the RSWG meeting. Attendees introduced themselves and their affiliations and the desired outcomes of the meeting were discussed. The meeting agenda and list of meeting attendees are appended to this summary as Attachments 1 and 2, respectively. Meeting flip chart notes are included as Attachment 3.

### **Action Items – May 22, 2003 Recreation and Socioeconomics Work Group Meeting**

A summary of the May 22, 2003 RSWG meeting is posted on the relicensing web site. The Facilitator reviewed the status of action items from that meeting as follows:

- Action Item #R67:** Send revised "Geographic Area Descriptions" to RSWG participants.  
Status: The revised "Geographic Area Descriptions" were distributed to the RSWG at the meeting (see Attachment 4). One participant expressed some dissatisfaction with the current descriptions (though they reflect previous edits suggested by the RSWG), but the Facilitator explained that the purpose of these descriptions is simply to provide an organizational tool for discussing proposed resource actions.
- Action Item #R68:** Review and provide comments to the Phase 1 Economics Background Report at the next RSWG meeting.  
Status: Tom Wegge, the study lead for the Phase 1 Economics Background Report, had received no comments of the report prior to the RSWG meeting. The report was discussed in the context of the update on the socioeconomic studies later in the meeting and RSWG participants provided hard-copy comments at that time.
- Action Item #R69:** Provide feedback/revisions on the RSWG roster to the Facilitator.  
Status: The Facilitator received revisions to the RSWG roster from several RSWG participants. The Facilitator will follow-up with those individuals who had not submitted their information outside of the meeting.
- Action Item #R70:** Confirm that the settlement agreement proposals would get the same level of analysis as PDEA items.

**Status:** Doug Rischbieter researched this issue and informed the RSWG that based on his understanding of the process, the difference is in the timing of the analysis. Initially, lower-priority proposals would not get the same level of analysis as proposals moved forward for analysis in the Preliminary Draft Environmental Assessment (PDEA). However, they would be evaluated during the NEPA/CEQA process that will occur after the license application is submitted and presumably be considered during settlement negotiations. Only a subset of existing resource action proposals will move forward to the PDEA analysis; this subset will be identified through the collaborative process. Proposals that are not evaluated in the PDEA will still be identified (listed) in the PDEA so that they continue to be tracked. Several participants indicated that they feel strongly that all proposed resource actions must be ultimately analyzed. The Facilitator responded that all proposals will be considered, but it is not feasible to analyze all proposals at the same level of detail. In addition, some proposals will fall out early in the process based on their feasibility and applicability to the project. All actions taken on proposed resource actions will be documented. The expectation is that the work groups will identify a prioritized list of resource actions that the work group feels should be evaluated in the PDEA between now and September 2003; the Facilitator will confirm this schedule.

**Action Item #R71:** Review list of resource actions, add/delete resource actions as appropriate, review the chart-topper, and provide comments to Doug Rischbieter.

**Status:** Only the JPA's consultant contacted DWR directly to provide comments on the Recreation and Socioeconomics resource action matrix. It was assumed the remaining participants completed this task in preparation for the June Work Group meeting. Comments were provided during the agenda item covering the development of resource actions later in the meeting.

### **Status and Progress of TRT for Socioeconomic Studies**

Tom Wegge, team lead for socioeconomic studies, provided an update on the socioeconomic studies and the activities of the Technical Review Team (TRT). Copies of the Phase 1 Economic Background Report were distributed to RSWG participants that had not received one previously. Written comments from Roger Masuda (representing Butte County) on the report were provided to Tom at the meeting. There is no immediate cut-off date for comments and the RSWG can still provide comments directly to Tom.

A TRT meeting was held on June 18, 2003. Two main topics were discussed: (1) recreation visitation model (part of SP-R12), and (2) property value analysis (part of SP-R18). To provide context to these tasks, a flow chart was distributed to the RSWG, which depicted the relationship between the operations and socioeconomic models and the associated study plans (see Attachment 5). This flow chart was also distributed to the Operations Modeling workshop earlier in the week.

Substantial work has been completed on the recreation visitation model for SP-R12. The modeling component of this study represents only one task of the study. The recreation model is a multiple linear regression model that uses historical attendance data (1974-2001) at the Oroville facilities as the dependent variable along with a range of explanatory variables that were developed to try to explain recreation visitation in the project area. Based on the availability of attendance data, two separate models were developed – one for Lake Oroville and the other for the Forebay area. A summary of the initial modeling results was provided to the RSWG (see Attachment 6). The participants discussed the results and requested clarification where needed. One concern is that the trend variable in the model demonstrates a declining trend in recreation use at Lake Oroville over time. It was explained that this trend is prevalent throughout California based on a review of other studies. Several participants challenged this conclusion, stating that they believe other studies and attendance data at other reservoirs suggest that resource-based recreation has been increasing over time. It was also explained to the RSWG that the results for individual explanatory

variables assumes that all other variables are held constant; therefore, the result for the trend variable is not a result of other factors in the model that may affect recreation use (e.g., lake level). Suggestions to improve the recreation use model included adding explanatory variables associated with competition from other recreation sites, change in user fees, facility capacity and closures, and fishing quality (i.e., creel census data). It was explained that the recreation visitation model only depicts historical conditions and does not preclude the RSWG from planning for increased recreation that may result during the new license period.

Due to time considerations, only a brief update on the property value analysis was provided. This analysis will be part of the Phase 2 Economic Background Report. A handout was distributed to the RSWG that summarizes the status of this task (see Attachment 7). This study will evaluate the role that the Oroville facilities, namely proximity to the reservoir and water elevation levels, have had on local property values. The study area was defined through a survey of local realtors.

## **Resource Action Discussion**

A revised resource action matrix was distributed to the RSWG (see Attachment 8). The revised matrix represents a consolidated list of all recreation and socioeconomic resource actions proposed to date. It is based on the Issue Tracker and completed resource action forms, and is organized by geographic area. All information that is located before the colon in the description column was what was provided in the Issue Tracker, or was the title of the resource action form. Information presented after the colon is DWR's attempt to add detail to the resource action based on a common understanding of the proposal. The homework for the RSWG is to review the new matrix, especially DWR's interpretation of the resource action, and check it for accuracy and provide comments back to Doug Rischbieter at DWR prior to the next RSWG meeting. Assuming that the RSWG completes this task, DWR indicated that it would provide a revised resource action matrix at the July 2003 RSWG meeting.

DWR also reported which resource actions have had resource action identification forms submitted: TF-18, WA-13, LF-3, LF-18, LF-24, LF-25, LF-26, LF-27 through LF-31, LF-41, OR-15, OR-16, OR-18 through OR-20, OR-23, OR-62 through OR-65, FR-2, and S/O-1 through S/O-14.

One Work Group participant asked if future versions of the matrix could identify proposal proponents to assist in coalition building, and that the matrix be sorted by interest addressed. It was noted that the matrix could be sorted by any of its columns but some of the older proposals may be difficult to attribute to an individual stakeholder. DWR agreed that a column would be added to include proponent information as available.

It was also noted that the completion of a resource action form does not have an effect on the decision to accept the proposal or move it forward to PDEA analysis. However, it does allow DWR to more accurately reflect the intent of the resource action. No proposed resource actions have been removed from consideration.

One participant noted that the Recreation Needs Analysis would dictate what proposals should be evaluated in the PDEA and the tentative schedule for completion of the Needs Analysis is September/October 2003. Doug Rischbieter said that he doubts the Needs Analysis will identify many proposals that are not already included in the matrix. Proposals that are not identified as needs and are in the matrix may become part of the settlement agreement. Conversely, proposals that are identified as needs and are not in the matrix would be added to the matrix at that time.

The Facilitator indicated that the PDEA might not identify a preferred project alternative, which will likely include items in the settlement agreement. It will address a suite of individual proposals that will form the alternatives in the future. Doug added that a draft Recreation Management Plan will be submitted with the license application and will represent the preferred recreation alternative. To

the extent feasible, the PDEA will likely analyze the No Project alternative and the licensee preferred alternative. Depending on schedule and timing, the NEPA and CEQA documents could be on separate tracks.

The RSWG subsequently began their discussion of resource actions by geographic reach, starting with the Diversion Pool. The discussion focused on whether resource actions should be joined together or analyzed individually. It was suggested that all of the resource actions pertaining to trails in the Diversion Pool area, and potentially the entire project area, should be combined into one master trails proposal. It was noted that it might be difficult to combine items from the matrix because the list is not complete. Previously in the process, the JPA asked for a formal trails study that would be equitable for all trail users; this idea was raised again. A trails task force was proposed to allow discussion of the trails issues in a separate forum. The RSWG discussed the pros and cons of a task force to address the trails issues.

Cathy Hodges representing equestrian trail riders stated that a task force could not begin to discuss the trails issues until the trail use designation is converted to that which existed prior to the decision by DPR to make the trails predominantly multi-use. She added that she would not support a task force for the trails issue unless the agency representatives were constrained from participating. She stated that they could be in attendance but not actively participate in the discussions. The Facilitator noted that such a constraint on a particular group of stakeholders would not be consistent with a collaborative approach and the task force formed to discuss the trails issue as a part of this collaborative process could not be structured in that way. Several participants agreed to serve on a Trails Task Force and are listed in the flip chart notes (see Attachment 3).

Michael Pierce expressed concern with what appears to be an inability by participants in this work group to follow the groundrules and stay on topic and the difficulty that that presents when trying to get serious work accomplished. He said that he attended the Environmental Work Group meeting the previous day and was impressed with how well everyone worked together even when they disagreed on an issue and he noted there were fewer members of the public in attendance there.

The RSWG agreed that the mission of the Trails Task Force is to “develop one or more trails statements to consolidate resource actions within the Diversion Pool section.” One participant noted that an evaluation of trails would require information from the Needs Assessment and the outcome of the task force could be different from the Needs Assessment. Harry Williamson representing the National Parks Service suggested that the Task Force should also address the fundamental disagreement between single-use and multi-use proponents before addressing the development of a trails plan. There was no consensus among the RSWG on the preferred type of trail system for the project (multiple single-use trails vs. single, multi-use trail); therefore, it was concluded that both types of proposals should move forward in the evaluation process.

Doug Rischbieter reminded the participants to review the matrix and make sure that the descriptions are consistent with their visions and to prioritize their top five resource actions, for each geographic region, for discussion at the next RSWG meeting.

## **Other**

One participant was concerned with what appears to be new trail construction occurring between the Diversion Dam and the Fish Barrier pool outside the collaborative process. The exact details of that project were insufficiently clear for the discussion to proceed, so DWR agreed to research the issue further and report back to the RSWG at the next RSWG meeting.

The RSWG discussed potential future meeting locations. Meeting location options are limited based on capacity constraints, teleconferencing needs, and liability concerns. Potential meeting locations suggested by the RSWG include the North Valley Tribal Health Center, Odd Fellows Hall,

and VFW. One participant also suggested looking into event liability insurance. The Facilitator will explore these options and report back to the RSWG at the next meeting

### **Next Steps**

The RSWG agreed on the following meeting date/time:

Date: Thursday, July 31, 2003  
Time: 6:00 to 10:00 PM  
Location: To be determined

### **Action Items**

The following list of action items identified by the RSWG includes a description of the action, the participant responsible for the action, and item status.

**Action Item #R72:** Confirm what the cutoff date is for the inclusion of resource action proposals in the PDEA.

**Responsible:** Facilitator/DWR

**Due Date:** July 31, 2003

**Action Item #R73:** Confirm that all resource actions are included in the matrix, confirm the descriptions are consistent with visions, and prioritize top five resource actions for each geographic area for analysis in the PDEA.

**Responsible:** Work Group participants

**Due Date:** July 31, 2003

**Action Item #R74:** Research activities pertaining to road/trail cut and fence in the Diversion Pool area and report back to the RSWG at the next meeting.

**Responsible:** Bill Cochran, DWR

**Due Date:** July 31, 2003

**Action Item #R75:** Check into potential alternative meeting locations and event insurance.

**Responsible:** Facilitator

**Due Date:** July 31, 2003